The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

## WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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It is the act of a bad man to deceive by falsehood.—Cicero.

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## *LABOR'S PARLIAMENT CONVENES IN NEW ORLEANS*

The American Federation of Labor convention, now in session at New Orleans, is the annual assemblage of the representatives of organized wage earners.

Delegates are spokesmen for millions of workers who compose a mighty volunteer army that is dedicated to social progress.

These conventions are no longer sensational. The time has passed when thrilling resolutions or inspiring programs for a new social order are even urged by a fervent minority.

Education and experience have taught the workers that the ills of which they complain is the old story of social injustice. These wrongs take new forms, but basically they are identical to conditions that impelled trade union pioneers to urge unity and education.

Labor is guided by its own experience and by history when it believes there is no short cut to a higher and a better life.

Progress is only possible through solidarity, education and individual development.

This method is rejected as "too slow" by men who rightfully resent injustice but who make the mistake of believing that their impatience and emotion can be a foundation for social advance.

The futility of this method can not be impressed too often on the workers. Ours is a "step-at-a-time" movement because it is based on a social consciousness and individual development.

It is true, as opponents claim, that ours is a "pure and simple" trade union movement.

We have no other remedy to offer workers. We propose no new system. We reject all programs by which we surrender control of ourselves either to public officials or to socalled "leaders."

We are not interested, as trade unionists, in what future generations will do. We strive to make today a better day and tomorrow a better tomorrow. We would—and do—make this world a better world, and we depend on workers of future times to do likewise.

The delegates to the A. F. of L. convention at New Orleans well understand the trade union philosophy. Their conferences and decisions will serve as a guide for greater activity among the organized workers.

The philosophy of trade unionism must be impressed on the unorganized. Its simplicity and its value must be explained. Our aims and policies must be understood by society in general.

Then will the trade unions function, unhampered by injunction judges or by an indifferent or even a hostile public opinion.

That day will be hastened as every individual trade unionist lives his principles and considers his duty undone unless he continually urges greater organization and education for the men and women who work for wages.

## *FEDERATION CONVENTION CONSIDERS MANY PROBLEMS*

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—The annual convention of the A. F. of L. was called to order by President Green on Monday, November 19, in this city. Welcome addresses were made by Dave Marcusy, president Central Trades and Labor Council; Charles Swallow, president Louisiana Federation of Labor; Mayor Arthur O'Keefe, Congressman James O'Connor, and John P. Sullivan, representing Governor Huey P. Long.

Colonel Sullivan declared that the five-day week was necessary and that social standards of every municipality and state in the country were high only where organized labor was active.

Congressman O'Connor said he awaited the answer of economists to labor's argument for a five-day week. "If employers would preserve their country they would join with labor to check overproduction and correct the ills that follow unemployment through automatic machinery," he said. "We want no leisure class in this country, but we do want all to have leisure." The federal law maker made a thrilling plea for justice to the men and women who labor and who alone, he declared, offer a solution for industrial problems.

Replying to these addresses, President Green referred to the A. F. of L. convention held in this city in 1902, and to the many representatives of labor who have passed to the Great Beyond since that time. "First on the roll is Samuel Gompers, who is first in the hearts of the wage workers of the North American continent," he said.

"The labor injunction, overproduction, child labor and the displacement of labor by the machine are leading problems that confront us," continued Mr. Green.

"The American Federation of Labor demands that human beings be protected. There is nothing more serious than the effect of the automatic machine. We will never permit a human scrap heap to be developed in this country.

"The injunction has reached the point where workers are denied the right to cease work. The use of the writ makes it impossible for our unions to function. Use of the injunction in labor disputes calls for condemnation by every liberty-loving citizen."

President Green called attention to the recent anti-union declaration by the National Association of Manufacturers and their statement that the evil of Communism is "greatly exaggerated."

"At the same time," said President Green, "the Communists held a meeting in Madison Square Garden, New York City, in which they hung A. F. of L. officials in effigy. This incident, together with the attitude of the manufacturers toward trade unionism and Communism is significant. It indicates the close relations between reaction and revolution in their common purpose to oppose organized labor."

A feature of the opening ceremonies was the presence of the crack quartette of Atlanta organized electrical workers.

The principal subjects that will be considered by the convention are recommendations and observations by the Executive Council in its annual report. These include the labor injunction, organizing campaigns, the effect of labor-displacing machinery, the company "union," unemployment, child labor, old-age pensions, labor's non-partisan political policy and workers' education.

"We are opposed to the company 'union,' because it is supervised and responsible to management," the council states.

The status of proposed injunction relief is explained. The Shipstead bill (introduced in the House by Congressman La Guardia) which would prohibit the use of this writ except to protect tangible and transferable property where the plaintiff has no remedy at law, has been considered by a Senate sub-committee (Messrs. Norris, Walsh of Montana and Blaine).

Following numerous hearings the committee presented a substitute for public consideration. The principal difference between the Shipstead bill and the substitute is that the latter does not define property, but it does prohibit courts from issuing these writs in many cases that are specifically stated and which includes activities now denied.

The council report includes a summary of old-age pensions and disability insurance systems of A. F. of L. national and international affiliates. The report recommends that Congress authorize a commission to investigate old-age income as a preliminary for old-age pension legislation.

The convention will be in session two weeks. The British Trades Union Congress is represented by Fraternal Delegates John Marchbank and E. Edwards. The fraternal delegate from the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress is William Varley.

## Convention Opening Is Record; Delegates Awake to New Issues

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—Opening ceremonies of the 1928 A. F. of L. convention can be classed among the most notable in the history of the trade union movement.

New Orleans lived up to its traditions for hospitality and warmth of welcome to fighters for justice. The addresses were of a high order. Every speaker spiritedly and confidently expressed his faith in the cause of organized labor. Representatives of the city and State governments, together with Congressman O'Connor, were as vigorous as any trade unionist in their demand that wage workers be given every right accorded other elements in society.

Congressman O'Connor brought the delegates to their feet with his description of the part labor has played in the development of every civilization. He challenged economists to answer labor's program to correct present-day industrial ills. "I await with interest their reply to labor's challenge for a five-day week," he said.

"The purchasing power of labor must be maintained if prosperity is to continue, and nowhere have I seen any other proposal by employer or economist to relieve our increased output through new processes."

Colonel John B. Sullivan, who represented Governor Long, took the same position, and was equally vigorous in defense of the five-day week.

President Green's reply to these addresses was a masterful discussion of issues confronting organized labor. He linked the National Association of Manufacturers with Communists. "We consider ourselves quite respectable, as compared to this combined force of reaction and revolution," said the trade unionist in his most sarcastic tone.

"These manufacturers applaud the Communists and denounce us as un-American, but we have not forgotten that when our members were in the trenches in France, many of these manufacturers were profiteering," said President Green.

Delegates and visitors who crowded the hall cheered this statement, that was indicative of the spirit of the entire address.

President Green was again applauded when he declared that labor was never confronted with so many problems. The injunction, he said, has been supplemented by mass production and automatic machinery that has developed a new phase of unemployment. Labor, the speaker declared, was not downcast by the increased number of these problems, but rather was labor stimulated to greater activity and greater determination.

The organized electrical workers of Atlanta sent their quartet to assist in the convention opening. These singers are known throughout the Gulf States. The Musicians' Union contributed a mammoth band that shook the hall with its strains of "The Star Spangled Banner," "Dixie" and the stirring melodies of the Southland.

## HOW THE INJUNCTION WORKS

Federal Judge Wayne G. Borah of New Orleans refused to consider charges against a rum runner who was seized by the Federal Coast Guard, and whose vessel was seized, according to the indictment, "off South Pass" in the Gulf of Mexico, but within the territorial waters of the United States.

Attorneys for the rum runner claimed that the location was indefinite. In upholding this claim, the court said: "South America may be considered as being 'off South Pass.'"

Federal courts are not so particular that justice be done when striking workmen are enjoined from "being in the vicinity of a plant." The late Federal Judge Jackson of West Virginia issued an injunction against striking miners "walking on the roads leading to the mines."

Under this sweeping ukase a miner who walked on any road within the court's jurisdiction that the led to the mines was subject to contempt proceedings.

Our federal courts insist on being definite and explicit when the liberty of rum runners are involved, but not when workers strike for higher living standards.

The Borah ruling is another illustration of the class character of the labor injunction.

## CAUTION NECESSARY IN LABOR BANKS

Washington, Nov. 24.—An admonition for conservatism in connection with labor banks is contained in the annual report of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor.

"For several years we have called attention to labor banking as a development of the labor movement to be most carefully watched and safeguarded," warns the Council.

"A bank is one of the most sensitive of economic agencies. Unions engaging in banking enterprises should assure themselves by every precaution possible of the competency and dependability of their technical advisors. They should avail themselves of all the supervision and counsel obtainable through state banking authorities and the federal reserve system. Such precautions meet with corresponding reward in public confidence and the safety of the bank itself.

"A number of labor banks are developing sound and wise policies and are a credit to our labor movement. Labor banking, however, is as yet in the experimental stage and should be accordingly safeguarded, and we urge greatest caution upon all those connected with them. Our action is based upon our realization of the close connection between these banks and the labor movement."

## UNION LABEL TRADES ELECT NEW PRESIDENT

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—George Perkins, former president of the Cigarmakers' International Union, was unanimously elected president of the A. F. of L. Label Trades Department at the annual convention of that organization.

Mr. Perkins succeeds John W. Hays, former secretary-treasurer of the International Typographical Union.

John J. Manning was re-elected secretary-treasurer of the department and the following vice presidents were chosen: First, Jacob Fischer, barbers; second, Matthew Woll photo engravers; third, Charles L. Baine, boot and shoe workers; fourth, Joseph Obergfell, brewery workers; fifth, Andrew A. Myrup, bakery workers.

## BUILDING CRAFTSMEN DEMAND UNION SHOP

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—"If you agree to employ union men we will join with you in a movement to adjust jurisdictional disputes," was the ultimatum to the organizations of contractors, civil engineers and architects by the annual convention of the A. F. of L. Building Trades Department.

The department withdrew last year from the National Board for Jurisdictional Awards in the Building Industry. The Building Trades Department, and organizations of contractors, engineers and architects were represented on the board.

The department convention re-elected all officers by one vote. No ballot was taken, just one unanimous shout. The salaries of President McSorley and Secretary-Treasurer Spencer were raised to $9,000.

President McSorley was authorized to confer with presidents of affiliates on a proposal that a $1 assessment be levied on the entire membership to combat labor injunctions.

### COOPERATIVE MARKETING

Washington, Nov. 24.—Cooperative marketing of farm products is the major remedy for the relief of the farmers stressed by President Coolidge in an address before the convention of the National Grange in this city.

## UNIONS FORGE AHEAD FOR FIVE-DAY WEEK

Washington, Nov. 24.—Considerable progress in establishing the five-day week has been made in the last two years, according to a survey by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor.

"Reports from the international unions show that in October, 1928, twenty internationals have 514 local unions working the five-day, forty-hour week," the survey states.

"These locals have a membership of 164,479. In addition there are at least 550 union members employed as clerks, secretaries, stenographers, etc., in trade union offices who have the five-day week, making a total membership of 165,029 who are now enjoying the five-day, forty-hour work week.

"Winning the five-day work week has been a gradual process, involving continued emphasis in conferences with employers, and careful adjustment of work. One international states that its local unions have been working for many years to establish the five-day week, and in many hundreds of cases it has been discussed at every meeting with the employers. This has resulted in the gradual development of working agreements and a large number of its members have secured the five-day week. In none of these cases has a strike been resorted to.

"Several internationals report that they are now in negotiation for the five-day week. The wood carvers have already made an agreement for it, and by March 31, 1929, they will have 210 members working the five-day week. In New York most of the shops employing their members and in Rochester the architectural shops have it in the summer months. The molders also state that a number of their locals in the stove industry have worked the five-day week in the summer months for several years."

## CAN'T HIDE PROFITS; PUT IN REAL ESTATE

New York, Nov. 24.—Profits of industrial corporations are so large that these concerns are investing their surplus in real estate.

It is estimated that the steel trust has more than $2,000,000,000 in property, Standard Oil upward of $1,000,000,000, while General Motors and Ford have extensive holdings.

The strong boxes of these concerns are bulging with cash, and large amounts are loaned to Wall Street on solid security for speculative purposes. This money is referred to as "bootleg" loans, because it is beyond the control of government or bankers and can be withdrawn at will. In such an event, conservative financiers point out that they can not supply funds and a crash in the stock market would be a possibility.

The situation is of interest to workers because it is an indication of profits held by the comparative few, and which should be diffused throughout the country in the form of higher wages.

## AVERAGE TEXTILE WAGE RANGES AROUND $25.34

Washington, Nov. 24.—Can a textile worker support a family and maintain American living standards on $25.34 a week?

This rate is the average earnings for employes in woolen and worsted goods manufacturing, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average hourly earnings this year in individual occupations range for males from 28.4 cents for doffers to 60.5 cents for weavers. Average full-time hours per week of male employes is 49.4.

There were 38,850 employes included in the bureau's study.

## COMMUNISTS SEEK TO WRECK THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Washington, Nov. 24.—A sharp warning against the destructive tactics of Communists in the labor movement is contained in the report of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to the annual convention of the Federation.

"The activities of the Communists to disrupt and disorganize the trade unions and get control of union meetings have not abated," the Council states.

"Their purposes are concealed under terms and titles which tend to mislead the unthinking and those not fully informed—sometimes expressed as destructive criticism, efforts to belittle trade union policies, or to reverse trade union policies for revolutionary methods.

"We have been constantly on the alert to warn our affiliated organizations and their membership against giving aid or comfort, moral or financial support, to these would-be wreckers of the trade union movement.

"The trade union movement is founded upon sound and proven principles.

"The life of our movement depends upon the preservation of these principles.

"The Communists are fundamentally antagonistic to the principles, policies, practices and law of the organized labor movement.

**"We repeat our assertion that has been often reaffirmed: There can be no compromise with the Communists, with their followers and adherents.**

**"They seek the destruction of the organized labor movement and would substitute therefor class war and class hatred.**

**"Their objective in the United States necessitates not only the destruction of the American Federation of Labor but the overthrow of the government of the United States and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.**

'Wherever there is discontent among the workers arising from unsatisfactory conditions of employment, low wages, long hours of work, unemployment, that is the point where the Communists concentrate their work.

"They seek to get workers out on strike or to control strikes called by trade unionists.

"Such strikes become propaganda centers with no real effort to get an agreement.

"Not work agreements with opportunity for steady progress, but rebellion and insistence on ultimate ends is their purpose and policy; not possible betterment now in the conditions of the workers but the promise of all things is the bait with which they seek to lure the toilers from their allegiance to the great organized labor movement which since its inception fifty years ago has brought so much of help and hope and betterment into the lives of the workers.

"The Communists have been especially active in the needle trades, textile industries, building trades and the mining industry.

"They have sought to form rival organizations in these trades.

"They have fomented friction and trouble and then placed obstacles in the way of industrial agreements.

"The organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the American Federation of Labor itself have taken a determined stand to expel every Communist from the ranks of the organized labor movement.

"We refer at this length to these matters because of the increased activity of the Communists during the past year and because we again desire to warn the organizations of labor, their officers and their members against giving countenance, aid, support or encouragement to communistic activities whatsoever guise they may assume.

"Make official inquiries before entering into new relationships."

## UNION-MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

By EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

When the union is accepted as the method by which workers shall participate in industry and collective bargaining is established the workers have a real contract that gives them status in the industry. This status makes possible a sharing of interest in production that is the essence of partnership.

Interest brings a desire to contribute and hence a release of creative initiative. Sometimes this happens among the workers as individuals and sometimes in an organized way through the union. The latter, of course, brings the more valuable results.

The form that this concern takes varies greatly; sometimes it is a joint educational project to provide skilled workers for the trade or industry, sometimes an employment service that connects these workers with employers who need workers, sometimes a contribution to administrative problems, or participation in improving production standards, the regular adjustment of misunderstandings and difficulties that come in all live situations, and finally systematic cooperation with management to make production effective.

These various constructive relationships recognize the fact that workers have creative ability and can and do make valuable contributions to industry from an experience that otherwise is closed to management. There are definite things that can be done only by workers, which can not be done by management for workers.

Many of those with the responsibilities of management fail to grasp that workers can think as well as obey orders. This thinking can be utilized by the industry if the right methods are employed.

Industry can expect to have the cooperation of employes only when voluntary agencies are the channels. Employers' substitutes will not serve the same purpose. Cooperation assumes equality in the undertaking.

The trade union is the only agency which workers themselves have created to conduct their relations with employers and it is the only agency that gives them equal footing with management or other representatives of the corporation.

## WHEN EXTREMES MEET

President Green, at the opening of the A. F. of L. convention in New Orleans, made a telling point against non-union employers and Communists.

The National Association of Manufacturers, at their recent New York convention, denounced organized labor while insisting that the evil of Communism is "greatly exaggerated" by the trade union movement.

In the same city, at the same time, the Communists, in a public meeting, hung A. F. of L. officials in effigy.

"They hung no capitalists," said President Green, who called attention to the historic unity between reaction and revolution.

## *Better Wages and Hours Depend on Trade Unions*

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—"Organization in trade unions is the basic step for betterment for many wage earners who are not keeping step with progress in increasing wages or decreasing hours of work," declares the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor in its report to the forty-eighth annual convention of the Federation.

"So long as the standards of these workers are lower than union standards and so long as we come into competition with the work of wage earners whose standards are lower than ours," continues the report, "we are handicapped by the downward pull.

"In addition to our concern for the progress of the trade union movement, we want to see more workers realize the great difference that higher social and work standards make in living.

"The shops, factories, mines, commercial establishments, offices and transportation agencies are the work-homes of millions of people in which they spend the most important part of their lives.

"The atmosphere of these work-homes, the nature of work relationships, the spirit of industrial government, are among the formative influences that determine the character and the spirit of the great majority of human beings.

"The purposes of the labor movement and the significance of its work as measured in richness and bigness of human life are a challenge to our capacity and love of humanity.

"While we know that trade unionism must depend on business efficiency as an instrumentality, yet it is the idealism and the spiritual yearning expressed through trade unionism that hold our devotion and command our service.

"Desire for growth is inseparable from human life.

**"Trade unionism is the most potential agency for providing opportunity for sustained growth for those who work for wages.**

**"It provides the means and the channels for intelligent self-direction.**

"For this work, so worthy of devotion and dedication of all that is highest in us we appeal in most earnest and urgent terms to all labor organizations that they give themselves without reservation and with a spirit of high endeavor during the coming year."

To forward this program the Executive Council urges local unions, city central bodies and state federations of labor to carry on intensive educational and organizing work during 1929 in order that all wage earners may be "united in a nation-wide movement for their advancement, that they may share as an organized, independent and responsible group in the industrial and civic life of our countries, and that understanding of the aims and ideals of the labor movement be spread among all groups in American society.

"Since reliable records show that in recent years the conditions of groups of workers on jobs requiring little previous training, that is, workers in repetitive or highly specialized jobs, 'common' labor, women workers, have not advanced in proportion to those of union groups, particular attention should be given to the organization of these special groups of workers."

## Injunction and New Machinery Leading Problems for Workers

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—The labor injunction and the revolutionary effect of labor-displacing machinery were discussed in vigorous fashion by President James O'Connell and Secretary-Treasurer John P. Frey of the Metal Trades Department, A. F. of L., in their joint annual report in the annual convention of that organization held in this city.

"The injunction is the most important problem facing organized labor because it strikes at human liberty," the report declared.

"It is not an academic theory we are discussing; it is not a mere effort to rally our members around the colors; it must not be a temporary attempt to call public attention to a grievous wrong. It must be a determination to use every strength we possess to secure the enactment of legislation which will restore government by law and destroy the menace of government by injunction which now threatens it.

"To complain of the injustice which equity courts have done us is not sufficient. To merely study the problem is of no value unless the knowledge derived is applied for the purpose of removing the cause of our justifiable complaints. What is required is aciton, action, more action. Every trade unionist must realize the importance of the problem."

In discussing the effect of labor-displacing machinery, the two department officials indicated that they do not accept the claim that this unemployment can be absorbed by new industries and callings. They call attention to a government report which shows that the radio industry, where women are mostly employed, pays skilled tool die makers but $44 a week. Women are paid as low as $13.94 a week, with the total average of all employed per week but $23.25.

"Every industry is affected by the new revolution," the report states. "We have entered in a machinized age and have apparently done little more than cross the threshold. Scarcely a week passes but some new invention has displaced skilled labor and in addition has permanently thrown wage earners out of employment in that industry.

"Every day the inventor of machinery, the chemist, the electrical engineer, the scientist, develops some machine, some process which revolutionizes production and dislocates the human element in industry.

"The displacement of skilled and common labor by modern methods of production creates a problem which is not solved by higher wages or shorter hours of labor alone. It is a problem which neither the employers by themselves nor our trade union movement acting independently can solve. But it is a problem which industry must be prevented from ignoring."

### RESTRICTION OF OUTPUT

Washington, Nov. 24.—Restriction of output was recommended as a device farmers should use to raise the price of farm products by Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Dunlap in an address before the annual session of the National Grange in Washington.

## *LATEST VESSEL DISASTER TRACED TO SAME OLD CAUSE*

New Orleans, Nov. 24.—"Inefficiency was responsible for the loss of the British steamer Vestris and the drowning of 125 men, women and children," said Andrew Furuseth, president International Seamen's Union, who is attending the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor. The Vestris went down 400 miles off the Atlantic coast.

President Furuseth just arrived from San Francisco when he made that statement. He showed a copy of a telegram he forwarded from San Francisco to the union's New York attorney before details of the disaster were known. The telegram stated that bad cargo stowing, faulty life-saving apparatus and general incompetency were responsible. Mr. Furuseth also suggested that suits for damages be entered in English courts, as no recourse was possible under American law.

"New York press dispatches affirm my estimate," said Mr. Furuseth. "There is nothing unusual in this estimate. It could be made by any competent mariner," he said.

"We now know that the cargo was badly stowed—that is, it was improperly placed in the ship. When the storm struck the vessel the cargo began to move and the ship listed—or tipped to one side, as a landsman would say. The crew attempted to throw the cargo overboard with their hands. They had no block and tackle. It took the crew two hours to heave two tons of cargo overboard. When the order was given to take to the lifeboats, then was revealed the absence of emergency preparedness. The boats were unseaworthy and members of the crew were hacking at the davits to release the boats when the ship sank. The suction swept 125 men, women and children to death."

Mr. Furuseth expressed surprise that an English vessel owner would take such chances. "Under the English law," he said, "that vessel owner is liable to damages in an amount equal to £15 ($75) for every registered ton of his vessel. This money can be divided among the claimants. In America there is no provision for such damages. The American vessel owner loses nothing as his ship and cargo are insured.

"Because of this exemption, disasters to American ships are liable to happen any time. Few competent seamen are employed on these ships and the crews of many vessels are largely composed of Orientals, who do not understand the English language and who are expected to launch life boats in raging seas when these boats are filled with excited men and hysterical women and children.

"The Vestris disaster again calls attention to demands by the International Seamen's Union that safety at sea be assured. Ships should carry competent crews and leaky life boats should be replaced by high-class life-saving apparatus that can be swung from a sinking ship by skilled seamen."